JUSTICE LEAGUE TASK FORCE 21 MAR 95

JUSTICE LEAGUE TASK FORCE

APPROVED COMICS CODE

QUITTING TIME!

PRIEST
VELLUTO
ALBRECHT

Velluto Albrecht

ALIVE

CLEVELAND.

WELL, Mr. SAVAGE, I THINK THAT ABOUT WRAPS IT UP.

CPD* DOESN'T HAVE MUCH OF AN *ANTI-TERRORIST* DETAIL, BUT THE FEDS ARE LOOKING INTO IT.

POLI

CONSIDERING THE *DAMAGE* DONE HERE--

--YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE *ALIVE.*

*CLEVELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT-- R.P.D.

PRIEST
WRITER
SAL VELLUTO
PENCILLER
JEFF ALBRECHT
INKER
KEVIN CUNNINGHAM
LETTERER
DAVE GRAFE
COLORIST
RUBEN DIAZ
EDITOR
BRIAN AUGUSTYN
ALIVE

YES, OF COURSE.

LET ME SEE IF I GOT THIS *STRAIGHT*--

--YOU SAY SOME *TERRORIST ORGANIZATION,* TICKED OFF ABOUT SOME OF YOUR *FOREIGN INVESTMENTS,* FIRST DEFACED YOUR BUILDING WITH AN *HOURGLASS* GRAFFITI--

--AND THEN *BLEW UP* YOUR OFFICE--?

THE WORLD IS A VERY *DANGEROUS* PLACE, DETECTIVE.

MORALITY IS RELATIVE.

Y'KNOW-- THAT'S WHAT *I* ALWAYS SAY.

YOU WILL EXCUSE ME A MOMENT--

POLICE

FRRAAAKTT!!

WHAT-- THE--

BAD NEWS, Mr. SAVAGE --?

YES. VERY BAD NEWS--

--FOR SOMEONE.

I DUNNO, CHARLIE--

--LOOKS LIKE NOTHIN' TO ME.

WHAT-- SOME STOCK TAKE A TUMBLE --?

ALIVE!

30 MILES SOUTH OF NORFOLK, VIRGINIA.

NOW!!

SUMM-BOTTY --SUMM-BOTTY SAY-- "YO BA-BY YO BABY YO!" THE RAY IS IN THE HIZZ-OUSE!

NOW-- SUMM-BOTTY SCREAM!

MOVE! MOVE! MOVE!

ARGH!

WESTLAR DEFENSE YSTEMS

SSZZAACKK!

ZZZMMM!

ALERT --!!

Oh-- CRIPES --!

TRIUMPH-- WITH ME.

TARGET EVERY HELICOPTER, TRIUMPH.

A7

A8

B7

B8

C7

KERRAASSHH!!

KRA-KOWWWWW!!!

EVERY ONE.

TODAY, WE'RE MAKING A STATEMENT.

THOOM THOOM THOOM THOOM

I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT STATEMENT IS HEARD.

TARGET THE ASSEMBLY PLANT AND EXECUTE.

A24

B24

A25

B25

TEAM TWO--

THERRRAAACCKK!!

--MOVE IN.

WHAT-- WHAT'S THAT--?

SOME KINDA EXPLOSION--!

WE'D BETTER ALERT--

LAKE EFENSE SYSTEM NORTH GATE

WHAT--? WHAT IS IT--?

KILL HIM.

uh-- SATAN --?

KILL- HIM-

NO--
NO--I MEAN--
STUN HIM.

OPEN THE GATE.

THANK YOU.

"KILL HIM--"?

GIVE ME A MOMENT, *GYPSY,* WHILE I NEUTRALIZE THE HOSTILE FORCES--

--USING DESPERO'S HYPNOTIC EYE.

ZZZAAAAPPP!!

ZZZAAAAPPP!!!

ZZZAAAAPPP!!!

ZZZAAAAPPP!!!

ZZZAAAAPPP!!!

ALL RIGHT, GYPSY.

IT IS NOW *SAFE* FOR YOU TO ENTER THE GROUNDS.

I SUGGEST WE REMAIN *CLOSE TOGETHER* SO THAT WE MAY--

--OF COURSE, THERE ARE ALWAYS *ALTERNATIVE* STRATEGIES--

OKAY, THE GUARDS ARE *HISTORY.*

WHAT'S THE *MOVE?*

YOUR "*MOVE*" IS TO STAY PUT.

KEEP THE AREA *SECURE.*

I SHALL RETURN SHORTLY.

HEY-- J'ONN-- WAIT--

--YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO JUST-- STAND AROUND--LIKE SOME--

IN A *HURRY,* GENE--?

WH-WHO-- *ME--?*

NO, MARTIAN MANHUNTER--I WAS JUST--WELL, THERE'S THIS *MEETING--!*

YOU ATTACKED TASK FORCE ISLAND, GENE.*

YOU SHOT AT MY CHILDREN.

GENE--

*TF #17 --RCO.

--I HATE HAVING MY INTELLIGENCE INSULTED.

THOSE WERE YOUR PEOPLE--YOUR WEAPONS--USED TO ATTACK VANDAL SAVAGE.

:URRKKK!!: WHADDAYA--WHAT-- J'ONN--YOU KNOW ME! I'M JUST AN ARMS DEALER!!

KRAAAM!!

ALL RIGHT!! ALL RIGHT!!

...THIS GIRL-- WATKINS--SHE SAID SHE WAS VANDAL SAVAGE'S DAUGHTER--

--SHE HAD A LOT OF MONEY--

--SO--I LENT HER A FEW GUYS-- SOME GUNS--SOME CHOPPERS--

TO ATTACK VANDAL SAVAGE--AND BY EXTENSION--MY TASK FORCE?

THAT SEEMS *ILLOGICAL*. VANDAL SAVAGE IS YOUR *BIGGEST CLIENT*. WHY ASSIST THE WOMAN TRYING TO *KILL* HIM?

I FIGURED SAVAGE WOULD *APPRECIATE* THE GESTURE--

--I MEAN--HE COULD SEE MY NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS IN CLOSE-RANGE *FIELD TESTS*.

I FIGURED ONCE SAVAGE SAW THE NEW STUFF, HE'D *DOUBLE* HIS CONTRACT WITH US--!

THAT'S TONY, THE PIZZA GUY.

YOU REMEMBER HIM

NO, HAPPY, I DON'T.

HELLO, ANYWAY.

RAY--?

THAT'S TONY, THE PIZZA GUY.

YOU REMEMBER HIM.

HEY-- RAY!!

THAT'S TONY, THE PIZZA GUY.

YOU DEAF OR WHAT?

WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

uh...

THIRD FLOOR.

KERRASH!!

DO NOT EVER ATTACK ME AGAIN.

THIS VISIT HAS BEEN A COURTESY.

NEXT TIME I SHALL *NOT* BE SO LENIENT.

--??

J'ONN--

HEY-- WAIT A MINUTE --!

HEY-- *HOLD IT!!*

ASSEMBLE FOR DEBRIEFING AT 1600 HOURS.

YOU DELIBERATELY DISOBEYED ORDERS, MODIFIED MY PLANS, AND WORKED TO UNDERMINE MY LEADERSHIP.

IN DOING SO, THE TASK FORCE WAS NEARLY *KILLED.*

FROM *PRECISELY* THIS MOMENT FORWARD, YOU WILL OBEY MY ORDERS TO THE *LETTER,* TRIUMPH--

--OR YOU SHALL *ANSWER* TO ME.

1600 HOURS. *SHARP.*

BAD HAIR DAY?

YA-HUM... WELL, RAY--

--GUESS YOU'RE OUR RIDE.

LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY TICKED THE MARTIAN OFF.

THREE GUESSES--

PERFECT.

I WAS ACTUALLY HOPING TO SPLIT HOME AFTER WE WRAP HERE.

SO, J'ONN-- BAD GUYS ALL GONE --?

J'ONN--?

--HELLO--?

THIS TASK FORCE GIG IS FUN AND ALL-- I MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO LEARN SOME THINGS FROM J'ONN AND TRIUMPH--

--BUT MY PERSONAL LIFE IS A TRAIN WRECK.

SOMETHING'S GOT TO GIVE--

NICE TRY, BABE

YWIP! YWIP! YWIP!!

I KNOW YOU'RE HERE SOMEWHERE, MISSY.

I HATE TO HAVE TO *SHOOT* YOU AND ALL, BUT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO COME OUT --AND *TIME'S WASTING.*

A MINUTE AGO I WAS COMPLAINING ABOUT HAVING *NOTHING* TO DO--

FWAAM!

FORGIVE THIS *INTRUSION*--

--BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT *LIKE* THIS.

NO, DESPERO, I DON'T THINK SO.

L-RON, IF YOU DON'T MIND, GYPSY.

THAT'S JUST IT, L-RON--

--I *DO* MIND.

I MIND VERY MUCH RUNNING AROUND WITH THE *THING* THAT *KILLED* MY PARENTS.

PERHAPS IF WE COULD--

YOU *REALLY* DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?

TIME TO GO.

J'ONN WANTS TO HOLD A BRIEFING. ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS MY *MOM*--*

--THE WOMAN I SPENT MY *ENTIRE LIFE* BELIEVING WAS *DEAD*. AND WHEN I FINALLY *MEET* HER, SHE DOESN'T EVEN *KNOW* ME--

--MY DAD TELLS HER I'M--

--THE PIZZA GUY. NICE GOING, DAD.

I NEED TO TALK TO *DINAH*.** GET MY HEAD STRAIGHT...

GUESS I'LL TELL J'ONN AT THE MEETING--

HEY, SAILOR. GOING MY WAY--?

* THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BETWEEN RAY #0 AND RAY #6 --CONTINUITY BOY R00.

** DINAH LANCE, THE BLACK CANARY, WHOM RAY HAS A CRUSH ON. THE POOR FOOL. --BEEN-THERE-DONE-THAT-DIAZ.

AND WHICH WAY IS *THAT*, GYPSY?

WHAT'S WITH THAT SAMSONITE?

I THINK YOU KNOW.

HEY--J'ONN'S TICKED AT *TRIUMPH*-- MAYBE *ME*--THERE'S NO REASON FOR *YOU* TO--

THERE'S *EVERY* REASON, RAY.

AFTER THAT VANDAL SAVAGE BUSINESS, YOU ALL WILL PROBABLY GET SCREAMED AT BY THE MANHUNTER.

I'M LUCKY TO BE *ALIVE*.

I *LOCKED UP* BACK THERE IN THE CRYSTAL PALACE, RAY. STUMBLING AROUND IN THE SHADOW OF YOU *GODS*.

I'M NO GOD.

OKAY, LADY-- FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT.

AND, PLEASE OBSERVE THE NO SMOKING SIGN.

WE ARE *OUT* OF HERE.

THEY ARE *LEAVING.*

I EXPECTED THIS.

THEY ARE ALL VERY YOUNG, L-RON. RULED, TO SOME DEGREE, BY THEIR EMOTIONS. LUCKILY--

--WE HAVE NO SUCH HANDI-CAP.

WE ALSO LACK THE INTIMATE LEVEL OF THEIR HUMAN EXPERI-ENCE, J'ONN. YOU ARE *MARTIAN*--

--WHILE *I* AM--WELL --I SUPPOSE I AM A SYNTHETIC CONSCIOUS-NESS IMPLANTED WITHIN AN ORGANIC BEING.

YOU ARE A *MAN*, L-RON.

A BEING WITH FULL CAPACITY TO EXPERIENCE THE *STING OF REJECTION.*

YOUR GIFT FOR GYPSY WAS VERY THOUGHTFUL.

SHE WILL NOT ACCEPT IT.

YES, SHE WILL.

THIS IS ALL PART OF THEIR GROWING PROCESS.

NOW THAT THEY HAVE ALL DECIDED TO *LEAVE*--

--I SHALL *SUMMON* THEM.

I'M RICH!!!

I'M FILTHY, STINKING, HORRIBLY, DISGUSTINGLY, DISTURBEDLY, UNDISPUTEDLY RIDICULOUSLY, UNEQUIVOCALLY, REDUNDANTLY--

--WELL OFF!

HEY, THAT LITTLE START-UP COMPANY I PUT YOU IN BACK IN COLLEGE PAID OFF, WILL.

WHO KNEW A MODEST SHOP-AT-HOME SERVICE WOULD GROW INTO THE *HOME BARGAIN CHANNEL!*

THERE'S *GOLD* IN THEM THAR CUBIC ZIRCONIUMS!

CUBIC WHAT--?

YEAH, YOU KNOW-- PORCELAIN OWL CLOCKS AND ELVIS SWIZZLE STICKS--*JUNK.*

CHEESY NOVELTIES BOUGHT IN *BULK* AND OFFERED AT BIG DISCOUNTS.

BUT, RUSTY--I THOUGHT I WAS INVESTING IN A SHOP-AT-HOME SERVICE FOR THE *ELDERLY* AND THE *SHUT-IN*--

--I THOUGHT I WAS DOING SOME *GOOD.*

YOU *ARE* DOING GOOD, WILL.

HELL, MY GRANDMAMA NEVER *MISSES* A DAY! WILL--

--ALL RIGHT, HBC ISN'T EXACTLY THE RED CROSS. I KNOW YOU'RE DISAPPOINTED.

BUT THE CHANNEL *DOES* PROVIDE AMUSEMENT AND, YES, EMPOWERS SOME PEOPLE WHO COULD NOT OTHERWISE GO SHOPPING.

NUTS.

YOUR *PAGER* --?

YEAH. LOOK, RUSTY--I'LL SIGN THE TRANSFER PAPERS AND SEND THEM OVER LATER.

NO HURRY. HEY, YOU WAITED ALMOST TEN YEARS--WHAT'S ANOTHER FEW DAYS?

ALL YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT NOW IS *WHAT* TO *BUY.*

ACTUALLY--

--I KINDA LIKE *THIS* JOINT.

I'LL TAKE IT.

--TO SAY GOOD-BYE.

I LOST A LOT DURING THAT NEAR-DECADE I SPENT IN LIMBO. IT'S TIME I GOT BACK ON TRACK WITH MY GOALS.

AND $40 MILLION CAN BUY A LOT OF TRACK.

J'ONN'S SIGNALING--IT'S TIME FOR HIS MEETING.

GUESS THAT'S AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY--

I'D BETTER KEEP MY NEWS TO MYSELF--NO POINT RUBBING ANYONE'S *NOSE* IN IT--

HEY, GYPSY--GUESS WHAT--?

I'M *RICH!*

YAY.

J'ONN WANTS US TO ASSEMBLE IN THE WAR ROOM.

HEY--CUTE HAIRCUT. NICE SUIT.

THANKS--

--HERE'S *YOURS.*

--MINE--?

THE BOSS SAYS *TEN MINUTES.*

TEN MINUTES--

GOOD.

VERY GOOD...

SAL
JEFF

MATCHING UNIFORMS--?!

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

COMPLETELY. THE TRAINING UNIFORMS ARE MEANT TO INSPIRE *UNITY* AND *COHESION*. THEY SHOULD REMIND EACH OF YOU THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER *INDIVIDUALS*--

--OR *LONERS*--

--BUT *PARTS* OF A WHOLE.

WOW. MACK CITY.

UH-- EXCUSE ME--

--BUT, WHAT ARE THESE *LOOPS* SUPPOSED TO "*INSPIRE*"?

HAD YOU ACCEPTED L-RON'S *GIFT*, YOU'D KNOW.

IT'S...IT'S...

--THE *ENERGY BATON* YOU USED DURING YOUR *VIRTUAL REALITY* JOURNEY THROUGH MY MIND. *

A CREATION OF YOUR *IMAGI-NATION*, STILL IT SEEMED USEFUL AND EFFECTIVE--

KEEP IT.

--IT WAS SIMPLE ENOUGH TO MAN-UFACTURE--

I WILL NOT TAKE GIFTS FROM YOU!!

VERY FUNNY.

*LAST ISH --R'OO

IMPERSONATING MY DAUGHTER--CONVINCING ME I HAD ACHIEVED MY REVENGE, THUS ALLOWING HER AND HER SON TO ESCAPE. *

YOUR WIT IS SHARP AS EVER, J'ONN.

AND YOUR GRANDSTANDING WITH THAT LITTLE MAN RABUZZO.

IMPRESSING HIM WITH YOUR PIOUS ANGER AND MIGHT. YOU'VE MEDDLED IN MY AFFAIRS, J'ONN--

--UPSET SOME VERY DELICATE CHECKS AND BALANCES WHICH YOU, IN YOUR SIMPLETON'S BLACK-AND-WHITE VALUE LOGIC DO NOT FULLY COMPREHEND.

*ONCE AGAIN, WITH FEELING --LAST ISH. --ROO

HEY--YOU'RE THE ONE WHO INVITED US TO THAT PARTY, SAVAGE--

SOON, I INTEND TO DEMONSTRATE EXACTLY HOW YOU AND YOUR-- CHILDREN--HAVE DISPLEASED ME, J'ONN.

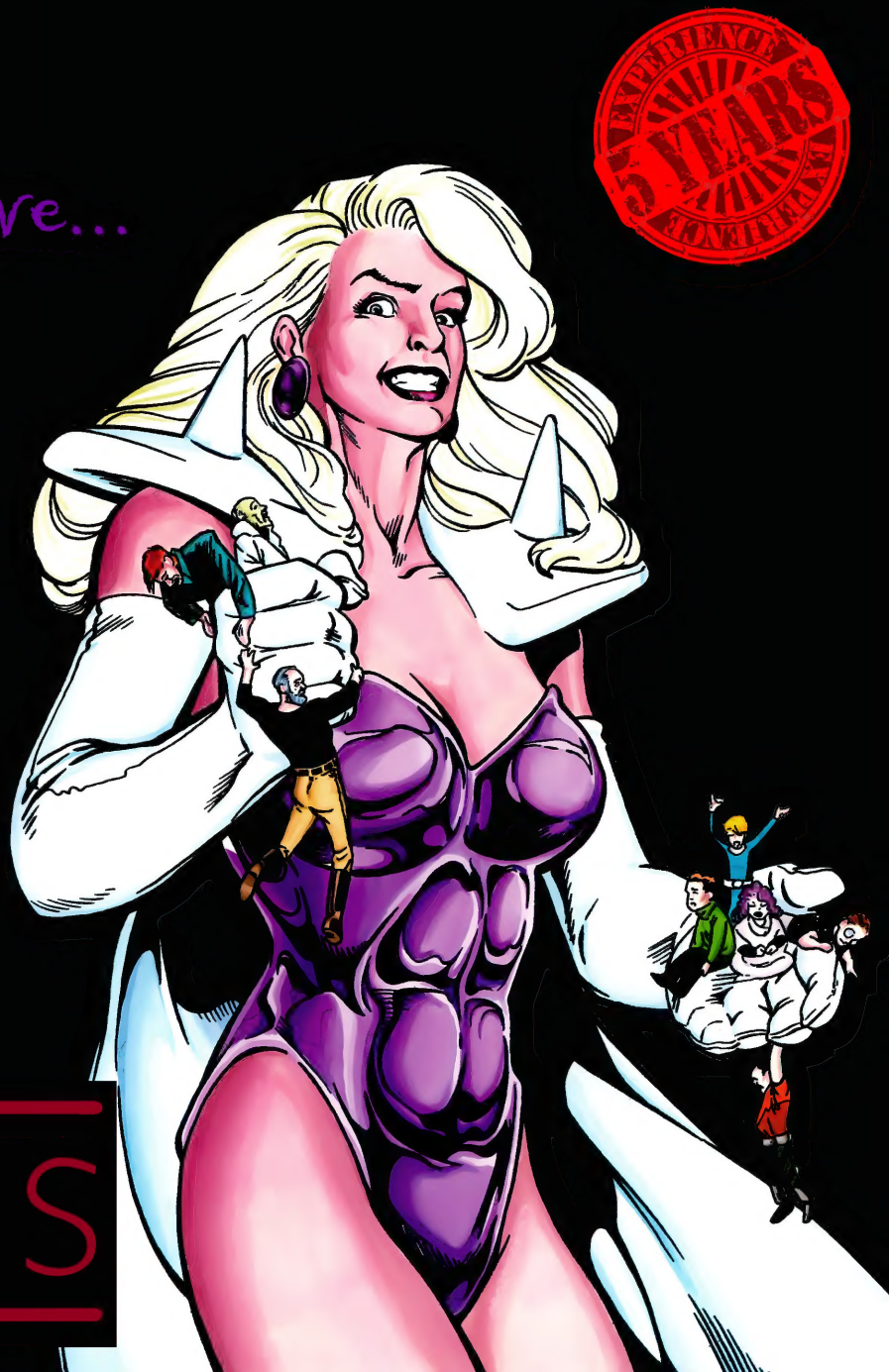
BUT FOR NOW--

HE CANNOT HEAR YOU, WILL-- THIS IS MERELY A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION.

WA-BOOM

NEXT ISSUE: CHOKULA-- ONE FINE DAY IN MONTCLAIR...

From Baaldur, with love...



GLORITH

novus